



ASES e - NEWS

DATE: January 2009

Hello Everyone,

I hope the holidays have refreshed you.

I am currently developing a new session with Julie Stott, a teacher who also has a son with ASD.

I know that teachers, integration aides and parents have created great visuals to support students and those in their family. I would like to collect photos of your visuals, how and why you use them and how it benefits the person with ASD. We would like to create a resource that includes examples of visuals that people actually use. We are interested in all types of visuals for young children to teens.

So if you would like to share your visuals please send photos to asd_cris@yahoo.com.au with a brief explanation and with your details or contact me by phone 9795 0328 for more information.

See you in 2009

Cristina

WORKSHOPS 2009

- Yarraville Friday February 20.
- Bentleigh Wednesday February 25.
- Thornbury Friday March 6.
- Kilsyth Wednesday March 11
- Geelong Monday March 16
- Echuca Monday March 23
- Mulgrave Friday March 27: Secondary school specific

- I am available for presentations at your school or workplace.

- *For more details email: asd_cris@yahoo.com.au and I will forward you the registration form.*

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GREAT IDEAS FROM PARTICIPANTS WHO ATTENDED MY WORKSHOPS.

- Write social stories using language appropriate to the level of understanding
- I got his favourite character (the Wiggles) and I contacted the picture on his shampoo bottle. This motivates him to wash his hair.
- Play his favourite board game as a reward.
- Talking about things he likes to keep him on track.
- Encourage child to greet people he meets “ Good morning Sheridan”
- Specific and positive praise
- Give clear instructions about what I would like her to do.
- Finding out interests and allowing time for these pursuits.
- Talking about special interest, relaxes her and then we can go on to do work
- Break down task and use a timer.
- Writing in feelings book.
- The student has a card he can give me to ask for a break without having to verbalise why.
- Coping better with change: Tell him of changes at the beginning of the day.
- One instruction at a time, clear step by step instructions



PREPARING A CHILD FOR CAMP

Cristina Isaac

FEARS: Unknown schedule, change of environment for eating and particularly sleeping.
Here are some ideas that may help:

- Find Camp on Google earth
- Daily schedule of activities with times
- Menu of food for different meals
- Map of camp
- Camp rules
- Who will he share a room with?
- Bring Calming toys or his special interest for when feeling anxious.
- Write as much information so he will be prepared before he gets to camp.
- Reward system (tokens) for doing / trying activities to be delivered when he goes back home.
- Lots of specific and enthusiastic praise.

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INTERNET



<http://www.stevespanglerscience.com/> Welcome to the ever-growing, ever-changing collection of Steve Spangler's favorite science experiments, recipes and cool science projects. Step by step instructions and videos of experiments.

<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/> We've been working hard to find the best teaching resources for interactive whiteboards. We've added lots more sites across a wider range of subjects and age groups!

<http://education.smarttech.com/ste/en-us/> Take advantage of thousands of SMART Notebook lesson activities for your classroom for the interactive whiteboards.

<http://www.visualaidsforlearning.com/products/index.htm> Visual Aids for Learning has created downloadable visuals to help people learn everyday activities. The images are ideal for children, particularly those with learning difficulties. Where appropriate, the images are gender specific.

<http://www.visualrecipes.com/> FREE RECIPES WITH STEP-BY-STEP PICTURES
VisualRecipes.com is a community of cooking enthusiasts who have the ability to easily share recipes with step-by-step pictures.

BOOKS



- **Adults on the Autism Spectrum Leave the Nest. *Achieving Supported Independence* [Nancy Perry](#)**

Adults on the Autism Spectrum Leave the Nest provides a guide for parents on how to prepare their children for adulthood, and describes in detail the kinds of services people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) need in order to live independently, away from the parental home. This book provides practical and accessible guidance for parents, therapists, people with ASDs, and anyone with an interest in helping people on the Autism Spectrum lead their lives with a sense of dignity and independence.

- Social Skills for Teenagers and Adults with Asperger Syndrome: A Practical Guide to Day-to-Day Life
Nancy J. Patrick
- Asperger Meets Girl: Happy Endings for Asperger Boys - *Jonathan Griffiths*
- Asperger Syndrome and Employment: What People with Asperger Syndrome Really Really Want -
Sarah Hendrickx
- Hints and Tips for Helping Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Useful Strategies for Home,
School, and the Community - *Dion E. Betts and Nancy J. Patrick*
- Making Sense of Sex: A Forthright Guide to Puberty, Sex and Relationships for People with
Asperger's Syndrome - *Sarah Attwood* *Illustrated by Jonathon Powell*
- Why do I have to?: A Book for Children Who Find Themselves Frustrated by Everyday Rules -
Laurie Leventhal-Belfer *Illustrated by Luisa Montaini-Klov Dahl*

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9 Tips for Successfully Mainstreaming Students with Autism

<http://lindahodgdon.com/newsletters.html>

One important educational trend that is considered "best practices" is mainstreaming students with Autism Spectrum Disorders into regular education classes. Mainstreaming means these students participate in classrooms with regular education students. http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001ftRi4yKTfOcI6xeNdN-fYcZb8ZzY69e3jbb10wOVCgnOJpf6-ltkFHIMTC_IBgn5VS0feXuKpP_zy0-7Y3WmkIwH61bexNUGpWLDm48rOwR_xa_YB6DLK-nZWStXdbU67j6kXTgsUvInsk6NGr92Lw==

It's important that the classroom staff receive some training so they will be able to create an environment with the most opportunity for the targeted student to be successful. With a little preparation, many students with autism can benefit from their participation in mainstreamed environments. Here are some essentials.

Get to know the individual

The classroom staff needs to communicate with parents and former teachers to know who this student is. What does he like? What does he like to do? What routines and communication strategies have been successful in the past? Are there incentives or rewards that the student finds desirable? What potential issues or challenges could there be? Are there sensory sensitivities to be aware of? Having a little information helps teachers plan for success.

Establish routines

Students with ASD love routines. Predictable routines help them participate in the classroom more independently. Following familiar routines can give students confidence and reduce the stress that comes from trying to figure out all the changes and surprises of life. Developing consistent routines for various parts of the day will help the whole class flow smoothly.

Communicate Clearly

Don't assume the student understands. Make sure to get his or her attention before communicating. Some students don't understand that directions given to the whole class are for them, too. Keep your verbal explanations simple. Support your verbal communication with gestures, body language and other visual cues.

Use visual strategies

Enrich the classroom with schedules, calendars and visual tools to give information, establish rules and support classroom communication and organization. Students with autism understand visual information. Using visual tools to support communication will help mainstreamed students understand and participate better. The bonus is that other students in the classroom will benefit from the visual supports, too.

Prepare for transitions

The confusion of transition times can be particularly difficult for students with autism. Changes that other students handle easily may become a problem. The students with ASD may not attend to the same environmental cues that signal a change. Change creates stress. To achieve success, plan ahead. Let students know something is going to change. Make sure they know what to do or where to go. Be sure to give them information about what to do after the transition. A visual timer and other visual supports help students manage transitions successfully.

Create social opportunities

A student with autism will not magically develop social skills just because he is placed in a regular education

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classroom. Design opportunities for interaction. Start by picking one or two students who will be responsive to their new classmate. Make sure they know each other's names. Plan activities that are rich with opportunity to share space, materials and experience.

Plan ahead for problems

Use the information you know about the student. Some students have a history of anxiety or meltdowns or strong reactions to situations. Will he need a quiet place to sit or a way to leave the group to calm down? Develop a plan for managing problem situations before they occur.

Prioritize your goals

Recognize that the most important goals in mainstreaming, especially in the beginning, may be related to participation.

Following routines, participating in activities and getting wants and needs met are all important accomplishments. Mastering academic activities may be a goal that is secondary to successfully managing the environment.

Just to summarize

Mainstreaming is an educational option that provides rich learning opportunities. With planning, preparation and teamwork, many students with autism will benefit.

Strategies for Developing Classroom Friendships

http://www.sandbox-learning.com/FileLib/Strategies_for_Developing_Classroom_Friendships.pdf

Children spend a significant amount of time in the classroom which is a wonderful environment to build lasting friendships. This article includes strategies for helping children develop friendships with classmates.

1. Activities – Create situations where children collaborate and work together. Look at their interests and abilities and use paired or group activities to encourage interaction. Physical activities like team sports or throwing a ball and counting the number of times it remains in the air before being dropped are fun and require teamwork. Small group projects like creating a collage where children have assigned roles such as writer, picture locator, and materials cutter, help children focus on a task and interact to complete it. Depending on a child's age and ability, give them more or less structured directions. For older children, let them select different roles and problem solve how to complete the project as a way to learn collaboration and compromise.

2. Direct Instruction – Sometimes it is necessary to discuss and outline social skills clearly for children to understand them. Role plays and group discussions about meeting someone new, having a conversation, sharing, helping, and being a good sport can illustrate aspects of the skills children may overlook. Rehearse new scenarios, frequent interactions, or a past event to practice real-world situations. Start by clearly explaining the specific actions in the skill. For example, when practicing having a conversation discuss and practice greetings, responding to questions, asking questions, attending to the person, and saying good-bye. Have children role play a scene with the skill. Discuss possible things to say and do when having a conversation and how choices during a conversation affect the outcome of the interaction.

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3. Bridge Home and School – Parents and teachers can work together to promote an interest in school friendships. Have children write a story about their classroom friends then ask parents to read and discuss the story at home. For younger children, include information about friends in notes home. Mention things like, “Alex played cars with Sarah in the sandbox.” Encourage parents to ask about who the child played with or worked with at school.

4. Activities Outside the Classroom - Children often see classmates at community activities. Joining a new activity with a classmate is a way to encourage friendships outside of school and have the support of an existing friend at a new event. Whether playing on a baseball team or attending story time, participating with someone the child knows is a way for them to have additional common interests.

5. Don't Pressure Children – Teaching children the basics of being good to peers is important. Sometimes children develop close friendships this way, other times they will remain classmates. Do not force a friendship, but encourage children to share, say kind things, and be good to their classmates. Use children's interests to involve them in activities such as sports, clubs, or neighborhood get-togethers they enjoy, so they continue to participate and find friends with similar hobbies.



Ten Rules of Conversation for Asperger Teens

by [Kristyn Crow](http://www.kristyncrow.com) www.kristyncrow.com.

Children with [Asperger's Disorder](#) sometimes have a difficult time relating to peers due to their social awkwardness and [narrow, often obsessive, interests](#). Especially during adolescence, these kids want to make friends and even [date](#) but they misinterpret important social cues. For example, they might speak too loudly or get too close, making other teens uncomfortable. They might talk incessantly about their peculiar hobbies, leaving peers perplexed at how to relate. They might have odd behaviors which tip-off classmates that something about them is unusual, yet it's subtle enough that it doesn't appear to be a disability. So peers think, "That kid is so weird," instead of wanting to reach out. This sets up the teen with Aspergers for [bullying and ridicule](#). But some schools are addressing the problem by providing more peer education and setting-up group practice sessions where they have the opportunity to learn the rules of conversation. [Peer tutors](#), or neuro-typical teens volunteer to participate in these conversation sessions.

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You can help your child with [Asperger's Disorder](#) by teaching some rules of conversation as early as he or she can understand. (Adapt them to your child's cognitive level.) Make it a game, where the child gains points or rewards for not breaking the "rules!" Have your son or daughter try out conversation with people. You may need to provide him or her with the exact phrases or greetings necessary. This is why involving peers is a good idea. On some level, your child needs to use or at least understand the current "lingo" of today's teens.

And frankly, we ALL could use a brush-up on good conversation skills!

1. When meeting someone for the first time, **introduce yourself**. "Hi, I'm James." Politely ask the person what her name is. If you're seeing someone you know, address him by name. "Hi Scott!"
2. **Smile**. Use a calm, friendly tone. Not too loud. Not too soft.
3. In most cases, **stay at arm's length**.
4. **Ask a question about the other person**. What subject does he or she like the most? What does she do for fun? Does he play sports? An instrument? Did anything interesting happen to her today?
5. **Use good listening skills**. Make eye contact. Nod. Don't interrupt.
6. **Ask a question relating to something the person just told you**. Always try to ask two questions about the other person before talking about yourself.
7. **Take turns talking and listening**. No monologues allowed!
8. **Look for signs of disinterest**. Turning the head or body away, giving short replies, refusing to make eye contact, etc., are signs that your attempts at conversation aren't wanted. This happens to everybody! Just say, "see you later!" and move on.
9. **No changing the subject!**
10. When it's time to end the conversation, (because its time to do something else, or signs of disinterest are being displayed) **say, "It was nice talking to you!"** "I'll see you later!"

If your son or daughter with Aspergers attends middle school, ask the special needs coordinator about conversation practice with peers. The results are sure to be beneficial, and many teens are more than willing to volunteer their help.

Kristyn Crow is the author of this blog. Kristyn Crow is the mother of seven children, and the author of three children's books. **Visit her website at www.kristyncrow.com.**



Assignments: Anna Tullemans

In setting assignments what we must remember is that the process is more important than the final product especially when that person has an autism spectrum disorder.

Successful Strategies

As most of our AS students are visual learners it's important to show them examples of successful previous assignments eg: show them examples of "A" grade.

Allow them to:

- ♣ Follow the same format
- Same amount of pictures on page one and two etc
- Pictures placed in the same space
- Same headings
- Same sub headings

Give them:

- ♣ Specific Headings
- ♣ Specific questions that need to be answered

Some students may need:

- ♣ Beginnings of paragraphs
- ♣ Contents for each paragraph
- ♣ Specific questions to be answered in the:
 - Introduction
 - Body
 - conclusion
- ♣ Specific number of paragraphs for each of the above
- ♣ Specific number of sentences for each of the above

Successful Strategies

Using fewer words on an assignment sheet can help to keep the assignment from being so overwhelming. Break the assignment into three pieces, on three sheets of paper. Only one part of the assignment is to be completed by the student to begin with. Once all three parts are complete help the student put the three pieces together into an acceptable format.

Academic Modifications

- ♣ Reduce the number of assignments
- ♣ Shorten the length of assignment
- ♣ Ensure students have access to information that they understand eg simplified handouts
- ♣ Outline in simple sentences what steps should be followed
- ♣ Give specific outlines
- ♣ Present the information with fewer words
- ♣ Give introduction only on one piece of paper
- ♣ Follow with body on separate piece
- ♣ Conclusion on separate piece

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Quick tip

Remember to use the students' strengths such as a special interest when planning projects. This will help with their research of the subject.

Assignment

Teachers Name and subject

Students name:

Due Date (must be finished by)

What is the assignment about? (main topic)

These questions need to be answered:.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

How many pages does it need to be?

How many pictures or diagrams?

What headings do I need to use?

.....

.....

What subheadings do I need to use?

.....

.....

How many paragraphs for each heading?

How many paragraphs for each subheading?

Who do I ask for help to get started?

When can I ask for help to get started?

Who can I ask for help to finish the assignment?

Where do I hand my assignment in?

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Interrupting, repetitive questions and talking too much

http://www.autismhelp.info/htm/printfiles_index.htm

Points to note

- A student with autism may ask questions repeatedly because it helps relieve anxiety.
- Questions about 'what will happen next' may be due to anxiety about the future; children with autism have difficulty anticipating what might happen next.
- The child might be reassured by hearing the same response to his question over and over.
- He may become distressed if the answer differs in any way from what he wants to hear or what he heard the first time.
- An articulate student may want to engage in conversation but lacks the necessary skills to do so. Questioning may be his only way of holding a conversation.
- A student who talks incessantly may miss the cues from others that it is inappropriate to continue with a conversation that is boring or repetitive. He may also interrupt conversations because he doesn't know how or when to join in.
- Repetitive questioning may be a result of mimicking the conversation of others – "What are you doing?" "What's that for?"
- The student may go on and on about a topic that he is passionate about. This is because he knows just what to say, however he doesn't understand that others may not be as fascinated as he is.

What you can do

- Be sensitive to the student's attempt at communication. Remind yourself that this questioning may be a means to remain calm. Questioning is often a phase children with autism experience before developing more meaningful communication.
- Some children love the repetition of asking and getting the same answer every time. Vary your answers, while still answering the question. For example, "When do we have Art?" answer "At 11 o'clock," "On Tuesday and Thursday," "After recess," "Before lunch" etc.
- Move the conversation on but still answer the question. For example, "You have Art at 11, you will be studying life drawing today – what do you like to draw?"
- Create a visual timetable for the student. If he knows what will happen each day, hopefully he won't need to keep asking. When he asks, point toward the time table rather than answering. There is a large range of printable images on an educational site called www.dotolearn.com
- List the times the student is allowed to ask repetitious questions on a timetable - you may need to place a limit on the number of times you will answer the same question. Make a clear rule – "You can ask that question three times only." After that, suggest more appropriate conversation, "We've finished talking about that now. Ask me about" Give the student a card with a list of alternative questions.

http://www.shoebotasks.com/autism-articles/using-strong-interests-to-achieve-positive-goals/sendto_form

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New Medicare Items for Diagnosis and Early Intervention for Children with ASD

An outline of the various package components follows:

1. Medicare Items – under the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA)

New Medicare Items have been announced that are designed to support diagnosis and early intervention **for children with Autism up to 12 years of age**. \$20.7 million have been allocated over five years to introduce the new items. There are three levels of these items, namely:

- Diagnostic items – for Paediatricians and Psychiatrists; for diagnosis and development of treatment plan;
- Allied Health Provider Assessment – for Speech Pathologists, Developmental Psychologists and Occupational Therapists (4 sessions in total);
- Allied Health Provider Intervention – for Speech Pathologists, Developmental Psychologists and Occupational Therapists (20 sessions in total).



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MEDICARE AND YOU

The Australian Medicare scheme can be quite difficult for parents to wrap their mind around - below you'll find a brief guide as to how Medicare may assist you with our Allied Health Therapies of Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy and Psychology / Counselling.

1/ Enhanced Primary Care - (EPC) allows up to 5 partially subsidized sessions for OT and Speech Therapy within a calendar year. For example you may choose 2 OT sessions and 3 speech therapy sessions for your EPC plan. Your doctor must organise a referral through Medicare for you to access the EPC.

<http://www.health.gov.au/epc>

2/ Mental Health Care Plan for OT (20 sessions) and Psychology only - (MHCP) allows up to 12 subsidized sessions annually. The 12 sessions must be obtained in two six session blocks - each requiring a referral from your GP or Paediatrician. The OT must be registered as a Mental Health OT. The MHCP is only eligible for a select group of children, commonly with a diagnosis of: Autism Spectrum, Anxiety Disorder, ADD & ADHD amongst others*.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - Autism Advisors

A national program of up to 40 autism advisors will be available across Australia from 27 October 2008 to provide information and advice to families and carers of children who are diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The Autism Advisors will:

- provide a link between the clinical diagnosis and access to early intervention programs and support services
- assist eligible families to access the Australian Government's funding package for early intervention services
- support families from rural and remote areas to apply for funding and receive payment.
- **CONTACT**
- **Autism Victoria Inc: (03) 9885 0533**

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